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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out from transfer students exactly what they are afraid of or nervous about when they start over in a new school and examines the implications these anxieties may have for teachers. During the transition, transfer students often suffer social, academic, and emotional distress which can impede their adjustment process and integration into the new classroom. With the support of parents, teachers can facilitate the adaptation process by anticipating anxieties that new students may experience and addressing these concerns before they become a hindrance. In order to identify possible anxieties of transfer students, 30 males and females, grades 4-7, of various races and socioeconomic backgrounds completed surveys which asked them to explain what they worried about during the switch to a new school. The findings showed that peer relations was the main concern followed by teachers and faculty, academics, and school layout. The underlying theme in their responses was an overwhelming sense of uncertainty which teachers can lay to rest with integration techniques such as a buddy system, parent/teacher or student/teacher conferences, school tours, and other welcoming activities. A New Student Survey is appended. (LL)

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Causes of Anxiety for Transfer Students: Implications for Teachers

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Abstract

During their transition to a new school, transfer students often suffer social, academic, and emotional distress which can impede their adjustment process and integration into the new classroom. Teachers, with the support of parents, can facilitate the adaptation process by anticipating anxieties that new students may experience and addressing these concerns before they become a hindrance. In order to identify possible anxieties of transfer students, 30 male and female fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh graders of variant races and socioeconomic backgrounds completed surveys which asked them to explain what they worried about during the switch to a new school. The findings showed that peer relations was the main concern followed by teachers and faculty, academics, and school layout. The underlying theme in their responses was an overwhelming sense of uncertainty which teachers can lay to rest with integration techniques such as a buddy system, parent/teacher or student/teacher conferences, school tours, and other welcoming activities.

The Problem

Need

"Points of transitions or 'normative life crises' have been characterized as periods of psychological disequilibrium marked by both an increased opportunity for psychological growth and a heightened vulnerability to psychological disturbance" (Felner, Primavera, and Cauce, 1981, p. 449). Whether or not a student experiences success or failure during this adjustment period depends heavily upon the teacher's and family members' support.

At some point during their teaching career, every educator welcomes a new student into their already established classroom. They take in a child who is unfamiliar with the school and its inhabitants; who is used to different texts and teachers; who has few friends and no sense of belonging; and who may be undergoing serious familial changes at home. To provide a productive academic environment for this newcomer, teachers must facilitate the transition process and quickly integrate the child into their class.

However, obstacles often arise during this adjustment period in the form of anxieties. During a

school transfer, children usually experience social, academic and emotional distress that can hinder their adaptation to the new class. By examining the roots of these anxieties, specifically what children are concerned about, teachers can implement practical procedures to settle the child into the classroom quickly and securely.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to find out from transfer students exactly what they are afraid of or nervous about when they start over in a new school. We know that they usually experience social, academic and emotional anxieties; but not much has been done to uncover the particulars of these stressors. This study will determine the particulars and the implications these anxieties may have for teachers.

Hypothesis

By breaking down general fears and concerns into specific obstacles that transfer students encounter when changing schools, teachers can develop practical solutions or preventative measures for integrating the child into the new classroom. Through knowing what to

expect from a transfer student, teachers can avoid many problems that hinder a new students learning process. The primary source, actual transfer students, provides the most valid responses that can be utilized for helping the next transfer student. It is my intent, therefore, to go to these students and find out what causes anxiety for them when they enroll in a new school. Before this can be done, one needs to review available literature and formulate a resource of basic knowledge concerning transfer students.

Review of Literature

According to Warren-Sohlberg and Jason (1992), an estimated six million children, ages five to thirteen, will transfer to new schools annually. Over six million children will leave close friends and accustomed school environments to begin anew in an unfamiliar school with no companions. Keat, Crabs, and Crabs, (1981) explain: "These children, confronted with few friends, a different living environment (and perhaps climate), and the trauma of the move itself, frequently become anxious and fearful of attending school in this new location" (p. 319). Bartosh (1989) also states that children experience anxiety when changing to a new school. In order to create an effective learning environment for these new students, teachers are, in part, responsible for helping them understand their fears and making their transition process as smooth as possible.

In order to facilitate this transition, educators need a basic foundation of knowledge regarding transfer students. Since teachers are often not informed about a new student's personal or familial history, they should recognize possible reasons for student transfers and how different motives affect the transition process. They must also be aware of possible

emotional, social, and academic responses exhibited by transfer students, and understand the role that parents play in this adjustment period. Most importantly, educators are responsible to utilize this information for practical implementations in their classrooms which may expedite the transition process.

Reasons for School Transfers

Jason (1992) classifies school transitions as either scheduled or unscheduled. Scheduled transitions occur when an entire class of students graduates from an elementary or junior high school and enters the next grade level in a different school. Whereas, unscheduled transitions typically involve one student in isolation leaving a school and/or community and relocating in another one. These transitions occur in the middle of the school year or after summer break, usually with no planned orientation. However, a scheduled transition often provides an adjustment period or freshman orientation program for new students.

Warren-Sohlberg and Jason (1992) conducted a two year study in twenty inner-city elementary schools in Chicago. Four hundred and fifty-one third, fourth, and

fifth graders were asked why they transferred to a different school and measured how they were adjusting in terms of self-esteem and academics. They discovered that students in scheduled transitions, such as graduations or school closings, performed better academically than children who experienced unscheduled transfers.

This relative success can be attributed to several factors. Bartosh (1989) explains how "this group arrives with the feeling of security of numbers and friends reuniting and an ownership fostered by family roots and history in the school/community" (p. 94). Students have peer as well as family support systems to help make a smooth transition. The adjustment periods and group orientation programs also account for higher success rates because they prepare students and teachers for the transfer process. On the other hand, students who undergo an unscheduled transfer are more likely to experience difficulty adjusting and therefore demand closer attention.

Most of the current literature provides common reasons for transferring to another school. Allan and Bardsley (1983) quote the U.S. Department of Labor in 1977 in saying that the predominant reason for moving is related to the employment of one of the parents. Beem and Prah (1984) explain that parents transfer

their children because "of an improved job opportunity; the result of a divorce, death or economic necessity; or simply a move to a new neighborhood" (p. 310). The majority of the available literature follows the same line of thinking.

However, Jason (1992) offers a different opinion about the most popular reasons for transfers. He provides an analysis of reasons for individual transfers by breaking them down into seven categories, "finances, peers, academics, religion, schools themselves, family, and apartment/house" (p. 72). He then provides the frequency of each reason as cited by parents in a Chicago-based study.

Surprisingly, family, peers, and finances were least often reported as motives by parents. Specifically, family reasons included "divorce, remarriage, other breakup of household, other joining of households, and other reasons involving the family" (p. 72). The peers category, also low in frequency, included reasons such as "trouble with kids from old school, wishing to be with kids at new school, and other reasons involving peers" (p. 72). Finally, reasons listed in the finances category were "new job, lost job, promotion, demotion, and other financial reason" (p. 72). Jason's study unexpectedly reveals family, peers, and finances as reasons given least

frequently for individual transfers.

In this study, schools themselves were the most popular reason given by parents for transferring their children to another school. Specific reasons included "old school closed, problems with teacher at old school, problems with principal at old school, problems with policy at old school, location of old school, attracted to personnel of new school, location of new school, wanted a private school, and other school reasons" (p. 72). According to Jason (1992), dissatisfaction with the public school system is widespread; and many parents who have the capability to do so, are transferring their children to private schools.

Religion and academics are categories closely tied to many transfers from public to private schools as well as general transfers among public school systems. Many parents moved their child to a different school to challenge them more academically. Only a small number made the switch to avoid retention in a grade. Many parents were attracted to the structure of Catholic schools. Others simply wanted their children to experience religious training.

Jason (1992) provides a useful typology of reasons for school transfers, however, I am inclined to believe that the numbers are higher than figures for the

general American public for a number of reasons. Many of his categories are associated, as seen earlier, with public to private school transfer; and are limited to subjects from his study in Chicago. Also parents and children may be more likely to provide a non-threatening motive such as "a need for a fresh start" instead of offering a potentially embarrassing reason such as family problems or financial difficulties. Certainly, divorce and abuse occurs in various families and should be recognized as possible unspoken reasons for switching schools. Teachers need to be aware of other possibilities and their significance in the school transition process.

Child Responses to School Transfers

Regardless of the specific reason, an unscheduled school transfer causes stress for children and adults alike. Sloan, Jason, and Bagot (1984) claim:

> School mobility emerged as the fourth most significant childhood problem (from a list of 35 life events) when ranked by parents of elementary-aged youngsters. (They) found that mobile families are significantly more likely to exhibit behavior problems than those families who did not change residence.

> Also...teachers rate mobile children as less well adjusted than non-mobile children. Mobile children are also more likely to experience decreases in grade point average (p. 48).

Children are obviously affected emotionally, socially and academically when they undergo a school transfer. The circumstances surrounding it can only complicate or ease the transition process.

Whether or not a student's move is accompanied by divorce, death in the family, or financial instability; it will be traumatic (Bartosh, 1989). The child is being separated from friends and adults who are trusted, only to find a new school where they do not know anyone. They will also be unfamiliar with school procedures, schedules and teacher requirements. As Bartosh (1989) describes, "They become visible in their confusion and aloneness as they look for rooms and eat alone in the cafeteria" (p. 94). The new student is certainly aware of this visibility and undoubtedly feels embarrassment, fear, insecurity, or other stressful emotions.

The emotional response of a child experiencing an unscheduled school transition is complicated and worthy of attention. Bowlby (1980) draws a parallel between moving for young children and the experience of death

and grief. When a child experiences a loss of place security and continuity with psychological roots, he or she often responds with anger, sadness, hurt, and withdrawal (Allan and Bardsley, 1983). They need to grieve their loss in order to heal just as someone mourns the loss of a loved one (Bowlby, 1980).

Not only may the new student experience sadness and grief, but also anger and frustration due to a lack of control and unanswered questions. Beem and Prah (1984) explain:

> From the child's point of view, the family's decision to move is an arbitrary one. Adults may discuss with each other the pros and cons of a move, but the child is expected to accept the parents' decision. At the time of relocation, a child's sense of control is threatened (p. 310).

Of course a child is not one to decide whether or not a move would be advantageous for the entire family. However, listening to a child's concerns and empathizing with their anxieties helps to ease their worries.

Unfortunately, young children have a difficult time verbalizing what they are feeling emotionally, which makes it difficult for parents or teachers to understand. When questions go unanswered or are

misunderstood, feelings of frustration emerge for both the child and the adults. If a child has never experienced a move or school transition, they may have trouble conceptualizing the process and develop more questions.

Beem and Prah (1984) translate questions like "Will I have the same room? Will the movers take the bathtub? Will I have a friend to play with? When I move away, will I still be me?" into language that can be heard by adults. "The child really wants to know: 'What's happening to me? Am I safe? Who will take care of me? What can I do?'" (p. 310). Children who make an unscheduled transition will probably ask these questions and more. If parents and teachers do not help the child find answers, the child may suffer even more emotional turmoil.

Unfortunately, many children who experience a school transfer show signs of unresolved psychological and emotional pain (Allan and Bardsley, 1983). This disturbance can be displayed in two fashions. If the child is angry or obsessed with returning to their old school, they may physically hit and bully other children, brag or lie. More introverted children tend to withdraw and fantasize (Allan and Bardsley, 1983). Clearly, it is essential that parents and teachers be made aware of the emotional effects school transitions

can have upon these children.

School transitions also have social effects upon new students. We have already seen the emotional distress a child experiences. Now, let us look at the link between emotional anxiety and social success. Sloan, Jason and Bogat (1984) conducted a study which revealed a close tie between the two. New students' "level of anxiety was negatively correlated with general attitudes toward school, peers, and the social structure and climate of the school" (p. 58). This suggests that emotional turmoil can impede a new students ability to make new friends and successfully adjust to a new school setting.

Socialization is critical for making the transition to a new school. However, it can be extremely difficult to do as we have just seen. Bayer (1982) stresses the burdens new students endure during the transition process. Not only is the child adjusting to a new school setting, "but also to the entire social and physical environment...outside the nuclear family. The child who moves must undertake the important task of re-establishing his sense of neighborhood and place identity" (p. 10). For a child, this can prove to be a difficult process.

This is especially true for youngsters who do not perform well academically. Warren-Sohlberg and Jason

(1992) discovered in their study "How the Reason for a School Move Relates to School Adjustment" a correlation between school transitions and academic success. Students who experienced a scheduled school transition (such as a school closing or graduation) performed better academically than those who transferred individually. However, all transfer students' grade point averages dropped the first grading period. "Regardless of the reasons for moving, all transfer students (in this study) suffer in the grading process when they change schools" (p. 82). For most young children, this inadequacy would cause even more anxiety and lower their ability to adjust quickly to a new school.

Furthermore, studies have revealed an association between academic success and social competence (Gresham, 1988). Jason (1992) explains: "Research suggests that children with high academic achievement tend to be better liked and to interact more positively with peers than do low achievers" (p. 33). Teachers have all seen children who do poorly in school withdraw or become disruptive, two behaviors that are typically disliked by other children. Whereas, children who succeed academically tend to have higher self-esteem and to take risks more easily (Jason, 1992). Therefore, transfer students who suffer academically in

their new school, may suffer socially as well.

Obviously, the transition process is an extremely stressful and difficult task for children to undertake alone. Part of the burden of guiding students through this turmoil rests upon the shoulders of the new classroom teacher. It is the teacher's responsibility to create an environment conducive to learning for all students.

However, we are not simply dealing with an isolated student in a school setting. We are also dealing with a child who is affected by various factors at home, in which parents must play a role. If there has been a geographic relocation of the family, the child must not only adapt to a new school, but also to a new home and neighborhood. Cornille, Bayer, and Smyth (1983) explain: "social isolation and other factors that might accompany geographic relocation can have a profound long-term detrimental effect on the psychological, behavioral, and academic functioning of young people" (p. 230). As teachers, we need to be aware of these factors affecting the child at home, and how they affect them at school.

Sometimes, the child is also coping with parents who have separated or divorced; who are alcoholics or drug addicts; who are suffering financially; or who are physically abusive to other family members. Each of

these factors in isolation is stressful to a child, let alone in conjunction. Add these to a school transfer and we can imagine why some transfer students have a difficult time adjusting (Cornille, Bayer, and Smyth, 1983).

Although teachers may struggle with helping a new student adjust, we must remember that we are not alone in this process; parents and family certainly play an integral role as well. Divorce or poverty in a student's home may be beyond the teachers' control, but parents and other family members are able to support their child and to provide a loving and nurturing environment.

Teachers are responsible for creating a safe and supportive classroom environment for their students. They must help facilitate the academic, social, and emotional transitions that a transfer student experiences in their school. However, parents and family members are also needed to help their children through this process by reinforcing the teacher's and student's progress outside of school and by supporting their children emotionally at home.

As we have seen, when a child transfers to a new school, he or she most likely experiences emotional, social and academic distress. Teachers need to be aware of these anxieties and provide assistance to

facilitate the student's adjustment to school. Meanwhile, parents need to address situations at home that may compound these anxieties and work with teachers at school to help the child make a healthy adjustment.

In order to achieve these goals, I believe we need to go directly to the transfer students and ask them how they feel during a school transfer. What are their greatest fears when starting over again in a new school? What do they worry about the most? What makes them nervous or troubled? These questions should be answered by the children who are currently in the transition process in order to create practical steps for teachers to take when they encounter a new student. My hypothesis is that their answers will allow teachers to create natural methods for easing a new student into their class and reducing their anxieties.

Design of the Study

Sample

In order to address the purposes of this study, a sample of transfer students from five different schools were surveyed in Charlottesville, Virginia. The students consisted of thirteen males and seventeen females within grades four through seven. While there were twelve fourth graders and twelve fifth graders, there were only two sixth graders and four seventh graders. This low response rate from the middle school means that their data will be included in the analysis of results; however, it will not be possible to make a valid comparison between elementary and middle school transfer students. The socioeconomic, academic or racial background of the sample was not the focus of this study and was not controlled for.

Measures

The New Student Survey (Appendix A) consisted of nine questions focusing upon causes of anxiety that transfer students may have experienced during the transition process. In order to gain some background knowledge of the subjects and determine the sample

characteristics, the first four questions requested the date the survey was taken, the child's grade, their gender, and date of commencement in their new school. A reason for leaving their former school was also requested in order to compare with the conflicting results found in the literature review.

The fruit of the survey rests in question six in which students were asked to list the five biggest fears or things that they worried about when they switched to their new school. Again, the purpose of this study is to determine specific causes of anxiety for transfer students. They were then asked to place a star next to any of their responses that actually occurred to ascertain which sources of anxiety demand closer attention.

Students were also asked if they were shown around school on their first day to determine if the schools had implemented any assistance techniques to integrate transfer students. Finally, in order to judge whether or not the students in this survey sample had adjusted to their new school, they were asked to describe how they feel about their school now. Nevertheless, the main focus of this study is to determine what children are afraid of or nervous about when they switch to a different school.

Design

The survey questions are designed to be examined in terms of response frequencies. Each response to "Why did you leave your old school?" will be copied on another sheet of paper, but not repeated. In other words, once a response such as "job transfer" is given, it will accumulate tally marks rather than be recopied over and over. This same procedure will be used for their list of fears and how they feel about their school now. This should produce a list of all answers supplied in open-ended questions and the number of times they were provided in the surveys. This list of responses will then be used to reveal any emergent themes or natural categories found within the answers.

Analysis

Of the eighty surveys administered, thirty were completed and returned, yielding a response rate of approximately 38%. One possible explanation for the low response rate is the use of parental permission forms. Although blanket permission to collect data from the public school system was provided from the central office, some individual principals requested parental permission for their children to complete a

survey. The procedure of taking the slips home, having them signed, and bringing them back may have caused some to be lost or discarded along the way. Nevertheless, with the thirty surveys returned, it was possible to record the frequencies of responses as detailed above and uncover some emergent themes.

Summary

Each open-ended question in the survey attracted a variety of replies which demand closer examination. In the following section, these results will be analyzed and discussed in depth, focusing upon the emergent themes and categories of responses. Information of the sample surveyed will be constructed from answers they provided as well as used to make comparisons among age groups, gender, and reasons for leaving their old school. The information gathered from the surveys will finally be used to discuss implications for teachers and how to help integrate new children into the classroom.

Analysis of Results

The study presented here yielded somewhat predictable, yet valuable results about why students transferred, what they were anxious about, and how they feel about their school now. As seen earlier in the review of literature, authors provided conflicting results about popular reasons for changing to a different school. The majority of articles cited job transfers and familial changes as the impetus for transfer, whereas others claimed dissatisfaction with the current school system. The results from this study showed "Family Move" to be the predominant reason, owning 50% of responses.

Other responses were too few in number to warrant validity as a common answer, but included: "Job transfer" (5), "Did not get along with teacher/school choice" (3), "Re-zoning" (2), "Brother had to go to boy's home" (1), "Grandmother wanted me" (1), "Parents got divorced" (1), "Military" (1), and "Not sure" (1).

It is my opinion that some of these responses are intertwined. More than likely, many of these fourth and fifth graders were not privy to the underlying reasons for switching to a new school and simply responded with "we moved." Answering the question "Why did you move?" may have boosted the frequency for other

miscellaneous responses recorded above. Nevertheless, the results coincide with most of the literature reviewed earlier and supports findings of "family moves and job transfers" as the most often-cited reason for transferring.

Once a child realizes they have to leave their current school and begin again in a different one, they find themselves asking quite a few questions. The results from this survey shed some light on the specific questions and worries that these transfer students experienced during this transition process, as well as illuminate common themes or natural categories of anxieties.

While recording the frequency of responses from the surveys, certain themes or classifications began to emerge. Several comments made by students related to comments made by other students which created natural categories of responses. For instance, answers such as "not making friends", "not having friends", "leaving friends", "not knowing kids", and "fitting in" naturally formed a group of responses under the heading of "Friends/Peers."

Another group of responses, "Teachers/Faculty," included common responses like "teacher will dislike me", "teacher will be mean", "I might dislike the teacher", "not knowing the counselor", "not knowing the

principal", and "getting in trouble with the teachers." All of these answers given by the students surveyed grouped together naturally.

Several responses were related to schoolwork and therefore fit into the category of "Academics." This group included responses such as "hard work", "lots of work", "making good grades", "making bad grades", "buying new school supplies", and "being bored." As one can see, each answer is subtly different, yet naturally fits together into one group.

The final naturally emerging category from the anxieties provided by transfer students was related to "School Layout," hence the heading for this group. Included in this family were "getting lost", "going in the wrong room", "where is P.E.", "where is my classroom", and "knowing my way around." Remaining responses were categorized into the "Miscellaneous" category which includes "not knowing what was going on", "adjusting to school", "being kidnapped", and "getting hurt." Only three students surveyed responded with "nothing" or "do not know how to respond."

All together the emergent groups from the survey responses are "Friends/Peers", "Teachers/Faculty", "Academics", "School Layout", and "Miscellaneous." The most often cited response for causes of anxiety are included in "Friends/Peers" group. Out of 109

responses given in total, 44 of these were related to friends or peers. This means that 40% of the students worried about friends and peers during their transition process. Approximately 20% of the students claimed to have felt anxious about teachers or other members of the faculty. Nearly 16% of those students surveyed listed anxieties related to academics. Roughly 12% of the students claimed to have been worried about dealing with the school layout. Finally, another 12% of the responses were in the miscellaneous category.

The one characteristic that all of these responses share is the feeling of uncertainty. The students were not sure with whom they would socialize, what the teachers would be like, what the work would entail, nor how to find their way around school. These questions or uncertainties may be rather difficult for some adults to tackle; how can a child be expected to deal with them alone.

Of the 30 surveys returned, two-thirds of the students said they had been shown around on their first day of school. Interestingly, the 33% who were not given a tour of some kind around the campus explained that they were "Happy", "Fine", "Wouldn't want to be anywhere else", and other positive feelings about their new school. In fact, every respondent described positive feelings when asked how they felt about their

school now. How can this be explained if the literature, as well as this study, stresses the importance of integrative measures to be taken by the teacher?

First of all, one fourth grader checked "Yes" for the question "Did someone show you around your new school on your first day?" However, she added in the margin "They showed me to my room." This may imply that some of the younger (or even older) children were unsure as to what exactly entailed "being shown around." The question was intended to identify students who underwent a formal tour of the school for orientation purposes. Thus, the numbers may actually be lower than 67% suggesting a need for more involvement on behalf of the teachers and administration in familiarizing the new student with their school.

Secondly, Cornille, Bayer and Smyth (1983) conducted a nationwide survey about the adjustment period of new students. Their findings showed that the "average" newcomer experiences an adjustment period for peer relationships for 23 days, and academic adjustment for 17 days. Unfortunately, it was extremely difficult to find a large sample of transfer students in the middle of this transition period. Of the surveys returned, the majority of them stated that they changed

schools during the Fall or before Christmas, and the surveys were completed in March. Therefore, the respondents of the surveys had already completed this adjustment period and consequently were more likely to report satisfaction with their new school.

The respondents may have already adjusted to their new environment, however, they did provide some useful answers in their surveys. The results supported current literature findings that "Family Moves" is the most popular reason for children changing schools. The students also provided valuable information concerning their fears and anxieties during a transfer. The most common concern for transfer students was about friends and peers. Teachers and faculty caused the second greatest amount of anxiety for transfer students. Students were strongly concerned about academics and the school layout as well. These anxieties may have hindered some students from settling into their new school as quickly as possible; it is up to the teachers and parents to facilitate this process. Suggestions of how this can be done will be addressed in the next section.

Summary and Conclusions

When a teacher welcomes a new student into their classroom, they can integrate the child more quickly and easily if they are aware of anxieties that the child may be experiencing. A transfer student tends to suffer social, academic, and emotional distress during a school change; as well as any compounding factors at home such as divorce, or financial difficulties. These stressors can impede learning, the primary purpose of attending school. However, if a teacher is aware of these possibilities, he or she can address them immediately and expedite the transition process for the student.

The results of this study show that new students are primarily concerned with friendships. They worry about making new friends, not having friends, leaving old friends, and generally fitting into a new peer environment. With this in mind, teachers and other faculty members can help ease some of the anxiety by providing a buddy system or some other method of social interaction.

A buddy system allows an established student to accompany the newcomer to class, lunch, recess and other activities during the first day or two of school. Some schools designate an outgoing and compassionate

student to undergo a special training process to be a buddy. As Bartosh (1989) explains:

> Instruct student guides about items to be shared and specific people to whom they should introduce the new student.... These people...should include: principal, assistant principal, all counselors, nurse, coaches, class advisers, librarian, lunch ticket person, bus driver, and any specialists (p. 96-97).

One might use a checklist for the buddy and newcomer to complete as they tour the building and meet the faculty. The purpose of the buddy system is not only to familiarize the new student with his or her new school, but also to provide social interaction and remove some anxiety about possibly being alone.

Transfer students are also very concerned about their new teachers and other faculty members. They wonder if the teacher will like them and if they will like the teacher. New students tend to go through a trial and error system of figuring out the class' rules and procedures. They often ask directions to be repeated or feel flustered when everyone else follows the "unknown routine" flawlessly. One teacher's requirement may be another teacher's pet peeve, and the new student has to figure out his or her new teacher's

quirks quickly.

An easy way to remove some of the anxiety that newcomers may feel towards their teacher is through a conference. If possible, arrange a private conference with the student and his or her parents before the child comes to school, or immediately thereafter. Ask the student to describe his or her former school and teacher. What did you like about your old school? What do you miss the most? Allow the child some time to deal with these feelings of separation while simultaneously showing him or her that you value his or her presence in your class. Spend some time reviewing the school handbook, if one is available. The purpose of the conference is to make the new student feel welcome and at ease in your classroom with you as his or her new teacher.

Closely tied to this process are anxieties about academics. New students worry a great deal about the workload, how hard it is, how heavy it is, if they will make good grades, or if they will make bad grades. Describe your own class procedures; provide a written outline or schedule of daily class activities and list of school supplies. Familiarize the student with any new texts and the class' location in each. Try to involve the new student as quickly as possible rather than waiting until "the next unit begins."

After school tutoring may be helpful to bring the child up to the progress of the whole class. Jason (1992) advises home-based tutoring with parents. If time permits, parents should expect to spend a certain amount of time nightly with their child, going over homework and assignments. The support at home is equally as important as the assistance provided at school, and should be discussed in depth during the conference(s).

Finally, a common source of anxiety among transfer students is the school layout. They have a fear of getting lost, walking into the wrong room, not being able to find P.E., and generally appearing aimless in front of their new peers. Obviously, the easiest way to combat this problem is to provide a map of the school building and grounds for the new student. However, it may be even more helpful to spend some time with the student touring the building. This can be done with the buddy or teacher and parents. Overall, the student will feel more comfortable and confident in front of his or her new friends after touring the building a bit with someone who can explain the layout.

The common thread in all of the anxieties of transfer students is the overwhelming uncertainty. They mainly worry about new peer environments, new teachers, new books and assignments, and a new school

building. All of these are unfamiliar to the newcomer and cause a certain amount of uneasiness which can hinder the adjustment process. However, as teachers we have the ability and the duty to facilitate this process and integrate the new student into the class successfully.

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Appendix

New Student Survey

Please answer the following questions:

1. What is today's date? _____
2. What grade are you in? _____
3. Are you a boy or a girl? _____
4. When did you start going to your new school? _____
5. Why did you leave your old school?

_____

_____

_____

6. List the 5 biggest things that you worried about when you switched to your new school. In other words, what were you afraid of?

    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____
    4. _____
    5. _____

7. Put a star next to any of your answers in number six that turned out to be true.
8. Did anyone show you around your new school on your first day?

    Yes _____ No _____

9. How do you feel about your school now? _____

_____

_____